

# INFORMATION REPORT

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             to Recent Government Moves

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Sources report the following information on the reasons for the appointment of Khasaba Pasha as Minister of Foreign Affairs and its probable effect on the course of Anglo-Egyptian negotiations:

King Faruq

1. When it was suggested to King Faruq that Ahmad Muhammad Khashaba Pasha should be recalled in the recent Cabinet reshuffle, he was at first pleased with the idea, but then refused to countenance it on the grounds that Khashaba had refused to join the Cabinet at a time of difficulty after the death of the late Prime Minister Nurgashi Pasha, and was only willing to do so now that the Ikman-al-Muslimin had been crushed. The King was later persuaded to accept Khashaba on the grounds that if he were not appointed, there would be dissatisfaction among the Liberals. He was also influenced by his belief that Khashaba is capable of improving relations with Great Britain and of getting her to cooperate with the present Egyptian Government, thus avoiding British pressure for the return of the Wafd to power. At one time it was thought that Khashaba would resign from the Liberal Constitutional Party, declare himself neutral, and induce the Wafd to accept him as Prime Minister and as Minister of the Interior. He was to take the latter portfolio so as to make the Wafd feel easy about the forthcoming elections. Khashaba's acceptance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, however, meant that he could no longer resign from the Liberal Constitutional Party or pretend neutrality.
2. Friends who met the King in private found him in a state of depression bordering on consternation. He told them that he now feels that he is hated, and that he quite expects to be killed. He used brave words about his willingness to die, to abdicate, or to leave Egypt, but felt that he had a mission to complete. Informants consider that the King is so genuinely frightened, both by the threats to his person, and the international situation, that he is now genuinely anxious for British support.

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The Liberal-Sa'adist Coalition

3. Both Liberals and Sa'adists now seem anxious to open negotiations with the British. Both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs fear that there might be an outcry from the opposition in Egypt if it were known that Anglo-Egyptian talks were in progress; and they fear, too, that the British might object to negotiating with a minority Government. It has been decided, therefore, to start preliminary talks as soon as possible and, if they seem to be going well, the King might call a National Front to do the actual ratification. In private conversation on 28 February, Haykal Pasha denied the current report that Egypt, if she negotiates with Great Britain, will ask for American representation at the talks. It was thought that the main question concerned Egypt and Great Britain only, but that perhaps American participation would be needed if there were a question of a military agreement.
4. This version of the opinions of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and his Party chief was confirmed by views which they expressed on 1 March. Khashaba Pasha stated that his main motive in accepting the appointment was his earnest desire to end the present unsettled relations with Great Britain. He had tried before, and now hoped to complete his effort, "provided that Egyptians would not allow their sentiment to paralyze their reason." Haykal Pasha expressed complete agreement, adding that no sane man could wish the present stagnation in Anglo-Egyptian relations to continue. When asked whether it was not difficult to resume negotiations before the final settlement of the Palestine question, Haykal Pasha said that nobody in his senses would sacrifice the interests of Egypt to the interests of Palestine. Besides, he added, it was not with the British that Egypt had any quarrel about Palestine, because the British had backed the Arab case against other powers. Other leading Liberals expressed unanimous support for the policy of the Party chief and the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The Wafd

5. The Assistant Secretary General of the Wafd, Mahmud Sulayman Ghannam, is as bitter as ever against the Liberal-Sa'adist coalition, and he complains of the muzzling of free opinion by the continuance of martial law and the press censorship, which prevents the Wafd from exposing the failures of the Government. This exposure is to be made as soon as the freedom of the press is restored, and the Wafd think it unlikely that a government responsible for the Palestine fiasco, the failure to reduce living costs, the widespread corruption of the civil service, the collapse of public security, and for the loss of the Sudan, could have any chance at the next elections.
6. According to Ghannam, the Wafd looks forward to resuming power; and as it would enter into possession of a "bankrupt estate," it would be quite necessary to seek British support. Ghannam hopes that the preliminary talks carried out by Sidqi and Khashaba will have prepared the ground; that the British will realize that only a treaty signed by the Wafd could obtain support of the people; and that no one in Egypt will dare to raise his voice against a treaty made by the Wafd, "since the present Government already has thrown away the Sudan."

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The Independents

7. In private conversation at the end of February Husayn Sirri Pasha expressed indignant views, both about King Faruq and about the Prime Minister. He considers the state of Egypt to be going from bad to worse since the death of Nuqrashi Pasha, and he expects grave disorders, unless the King will form an all-party government under a neutral Prime Minister (such as himself).

Sirri Pasha expressed agreement with the views of the other politicians who were consulted about Anglo-Egyptian relations: it would be the first duty of any government to conclude an immediate agreement with Great Britain, or the gravest consequence might result.

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